DÍAZ CANALES GUARNIDO

BLACKSAD

Arctic-Nation

BLACKSAD

Arctic-Nation

Scénario :

Juan DÍAZ CANALES

Dessin & Couleur :

Juanjo GUARNIDO

DARGAUD

PARIS • BARCELONE • BRUXELLES • LAUSANNE • LONDRES • MONTREAL • NEW YORK • STUTTGART

One day,
I will write down my memories.

I have seen--and lived as well--incredible experiences, such that all who read them will think the whole thing a pack of lies, that such an amount of spite cannot possibly hold in this world.

I would not even be surprised if, once published, the whole thing reads as if it were a detective novel.

It would certainly sell well.
People do love a morbid one...

How ironic!
I will die rich and misunderstood.

Make our Homes and Streets SAFE!
VOTE REPUBLICA

?!

CLAC!

Nasty business, these hate crimes!

Name's Weekly, of "What's News". Which rag do you bump for, pal?

For "Bad News". I highly suggest my latest article, "One is not friendly".

That kind makes me sick. We cats are cursed with an acute sense of smell, which makes it particularly difficult when one crosses somebody who's allergic to soap and, on top of that, takes you for one to spell out your thoughts for newspapers! I made two decisions then: to stop taking notes in public, and to go straight to my client.

Miss Grey was a teacher in one of the rare schools which were still left on "The Line", the name given to this disaster victim of a district.

She was a woman of frail body and strong spirit. I was here regarding the disappearance of one of her little angels.

I know it sounds strange, M. Blacksad...

...but Kylie's disappearance didn't seem to bother anyone in the district, not even her own mother.

It makes no sense, especially coming from this girl who's the definition of the words "difficult childhood". Her mother died when she was even younger, and as for her father...they never met.

I see. Two unmarried mothers. And the police?

As always, they were happy to blame the "Black Claws" gang, and leave it at that.

Things have changed quite a bit recently. This district seemed a dream when we founded it. You'd think that after the war, things would be easier. Wrong: the closure of the plane factory brought only unemployment and delinquency. The district broke down. The dream has become a nightmare.

Just look at old Oldsmill. These people throw their money down the drain while others sweat looking for work.

But I do not give up. I believe that now more than ever is the time to fight.

That's very brave, Miss Grey.

I'll do my best for the kid. Don't worry yourself.

... AND I STILL HAVE A MESSAGE FOR THOSE BRAVE YOUTHS, WHO EVEN NOW WORK TO CLEAN OUR STREETS OF THE NEGROS AND DRUNKARDS! ...

... One day, not far from now, the world will be again be under the control of the proud white race, that which God set on earth to command all others!

...And on that day, all will be smothered by the mighty snowstorm!

and the earth will be perfect and pure, as it was at the dawn of time!

A little cold, that speech, eh?

!

...
Now now, friend! Wouldn't you rather warm up with a drink than a fight?

Friends... why not?

After all, we really both were strangers in a strange land.

"The Line" is about to explode. One one side you've got those colorless fades who think happiness can only be found in the North Pole...

...and on the other, "The Claws", who are black as assholes, every one...

...and they're all insane to boot... Slurrp!

Mmmm! This bourbon milkshake is delicious! Want a taste?

No thanks, I don't care for milk.

You're not a journalist, I take it?

No. In fact, I'm a land-surveying geometrician.

No, seriously...from those notes you were taking, I'd think you were a cop or something.

You got a death wish, Cotten? We tell you a thousand times, and a thousand times you make the same mistake.

AIR U.S. FORCE

NO colored people ALLOWED

Can't you read?

Boys, you know perfectly well that I, old senile that I am...

...am completely incapable of catching half a glimpse of your admirable and immaculate white skins....

HA!

HA HA HA!

...and besides, I don't bother nobody. With a bit of luck I'll win enough to fly away to Las Vegas, and won't muck up the scenery ever again.

And you two? You cant read either?

Oh no...

Isn't this good enough, right here?

Hear that boys? We've got a tough guy!

Why I shouldn't take that black off you in pieces?

Well, you can always try. Though I could hardly make a decent manteau...

... from such a tiny pelt.

I'm going ta...!

You there, go fetch chief Karup.

OK, HUK.

K-RRAASH!

Punks like you don't respect a thing.

Whether it be the law, private property, or common moral values, wherever you go, you sow disorder...

...and anarchy.

Your daughter is quite pretty!

And nothing annoys a man of the law such as I...

POF!

...like a dirty anarchist.

The law can be interpreted many ways, you know...

?

SNIF SNIFF

Quite true. Myself, I prefer the interpretation of the Old Testament. Perhaps you've heard of it? "An eye for an eye"...

Today we are few, those who would carry on the wishes of the great men who founded our country. Do you know who this sabre belonged to?

I would imagine General Lee, "The King of Spades".* A worthy icon for the defenders of lost causes....

Seems the chief can't decide on which cause to defend, though. One could say he owes his job to Oldsmill, who doesn't even have anything left to lose...

I'm surprised. I wouldn't expect one like you to know anything of history.

I've always thought it essential to learn from the screwups of our predecessors...

Wife's here, chief!

In that case, learn their lessons well, such as: "don't play with fire". As you might have noticed, you two aren't welcome on The Line.

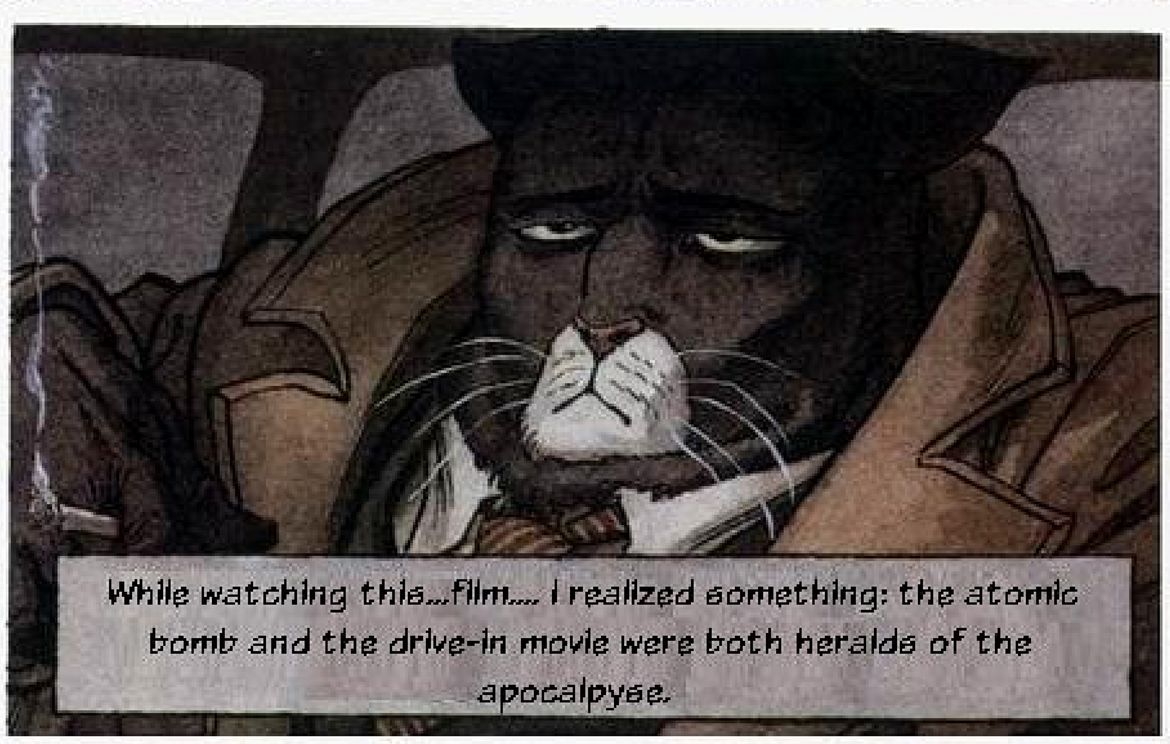
I'll keep that in mind...

*(In French, the suit of spades is the suit of swords)

AUTOMOBILE
HEMI

Mister president, this is Doctor Howard. He's our man.

The fate of America is in your hands, doc.


While watching this...film.... I realized something: the atomic bomb and the drive-in movie were both heralds of the apocalypse.

But I wasn't here to enjoy B-movies--
I was here on business.
Danah: the mother of the missing Kylie.
What do you want?

Just a meeting in a quiet place. I've talked to Miss Grey.

Grrmf... fine. But I'll finish my shift, first.

Heartened by the knowledge that the world is safe from the threat of giant ants, I go to meet Dinah.

You must think me a monster, to not tell a soul that my own daughter's gone missing. But I've got my reasons to be wary of white justice.

Euh... justice is blind. It doesn't care about shades.

It's eyes are better in this district--like a predator's.

You, you're from the big city, you don't know anything. Here, there are only two kinds of people: the killers and the killed. We live in a constant state of war, and for the coloreds, it looks like it's already lost.

But you gotta be patient. Calculating. Revenge is a dish best served cold.

The force is filled with types like Karup. I was a maid at his place once, and he just kept staring at Kylie, like she was fresh meat.

He's dangerous.

So thanks for caring... but I don't plan on taking this to the cops.

That doesn't justify leaving Kylie for dead...

You don't think it's killing me? That I'm just sitting here happy, not knowing if my baby is dead or hurt or worse yet in the hands of one of those... those...

...pigs...

Like Oldsmill's kid, you mean? They say you... knew... him.

WHACK!!

What kind of sick bastard...

...can spew this kind of shit!

...bastard?

Her exact words. Are you sure your "sources" are reliable?

You seen what the Arctic butchers did last? Took a black ewe, shaved him, and burned him alive! Now that...

...is some sick shit!

Oy! We don't serve punks in this establi--

SHOVE IT!

TROMP!

E-E-E-EEEH!..

OH-OH-OH-OH!..

AAAAA!!

O-O-OOOW!..

You. Reporter?

Good. You're gonna do us a favor.

Print this: that we didn't kidnap no girl. They want to know where she is, they should ask that piece of trash Karup.

Or perhaps Oldermill?

What's wrong with your face, brother?

Nothing at all. And your brain?

Don't. Touch. The beauty mark.

Alright...make sure your pal honors his promises. It would be best for you two that way, tough guy...

Obviously, the people here had something against my face. Too bad for them; I planned to keep showing it, at least until I found the kid.

You wouldn't really have shot him, would you?

Of course not! You ain't the type...

And you. You plan to print that crap?

And how! Only two days on the job, and I've already got the story of the week! Bit more, and I'll be the patron saint of "What's News"!

And speaking of, you know why the guys at the paper call me "Weekly"?

Obviously not.

'Cause I only go there once a week, to deliver my articles. I'm sort of a mythical beast to them...

Well then, Mister Myth: I want you know what Karup's angle in all this is, how he got that cushy job, and most importantly, what goes on inside that house of his.

Worry you not, I won't miss a thing...

TAP TAP

Mythical... Heh...

E.V. OLDSMILL SPORT CLUB PRIVATE AREA

And what may I do for you, good sir?

TWHAP!

POC

I'll be blunt. I think you have something to do with the kidnapping of little Kylie.

I see. And?

Well, the fact is that I'm being paid to find her...

...and your son's name just keeps popping up everywhere I go.

TWHAP

POC!

Of course...and you will also have heard that Karup is taking care to divert all blame from any place where it might tarnish my family's name... such a loyal pack of idiots.

Tell me: who in their right mind would sleep with this sorry excuse for a son?

I fear the matter has become too big for our sizeable chief of police to handle. It would not surprise me to learn that the dirty gamine is his own daughter... after all, that family already married into black. But then... anyone can make a retard.

Let me tell you something, my friend: I find it disturbing that a man of Karup's class might mix with rabble like Danah.

And in what way does it disturb you, this "rabble"?

POF

They...contaminate, let us say. Before they arrived, this district was the model of prosperity, and look at it now: nothing but homelessness and misery.

POC POC

But that's not the case for everyone, now is it? Some still live quite well. It's such a pity that none in your family could benefit from a strong heritage like yours...

Sometimes the mixture turns out well.

TWHAPP!

POC!

Au revoir, M. Oldsmill.

Brrr...
Stupid winter...

TOC
TOC

?

What do we
have here...?

I love my job!

...and that's not all!

WHITE ONLY

After the fox left, I tailed him to a restaurant. And who do you imagine he was meeting there, our adulterous lover?

Why, the girl's mother herself!

I hid under a table to spy. Danah seemed quite nervous, to tell the truth.

Just bits and pieces, but Danah was using a secretive tone, like she was speaking of something important.

What kind of "something"?

No idea. All I know is that it led to...

And what did you hear?

She is my daughter, and I will not let her be hurt!

Hmm. I'd say the chief knows where the girl is.

You'd say? The guy's a pervert! Let me tell you, Mister Karup's adventures will be told in "What's News!"

Let's see how the public react when they find out that their chief likes to play "headstock"!

Old Oldsmill was too rich and cynical to even need to lie.

I'd figured that Karup might be Kylie's father. It would confirm my suspicion that there were multiple motives for making this girl disappear.

I went to Dinah's, intent on finding out what she'd kept from me during our first meeting. Either she'd sing, or she'd tell me somebody who could.

One detail caught my eye: someone had gone to the trouble of sweeping over their prints.

And besides that...the door was wide open, in winter.

Kylie would never see her mother again. Someone had made sure of that.

The body of Danah, which had overflowed with life and beauty just a few hours before, lay dead. By its wounds, I would have said that it had been mutilated by a weapon with a edge, like a machete...

... or a sabre.

I didn't have the proof needed to accuse Karup directly...

... but experience had taught me to play my cards carefully.

Now what would the great General Lee think of you if he learned how you used his sword?

I am sure that I have no idea what the devil you're talking about. Please remove yourself.

Listen well, Karup. You had best find yourself a concrete alibi, because I am going to tear you down. And I hope for your sake that nothing happens to that little girl, or I swear to--

Leave my husband in peace! He is a man of the law! No one is better suited for keeping the peace than—

Jezebel! . . .

...and I will not tolerate filth like you insulting him in this way!

This piece of shit bothering you?

Oh-ho! And who exactly are you defending, Romeo? The chief, or his charming and accessible wife?

WHAP!

And what of you, friends? Is Karup here really the man you want handling your children? And I do mean handling...

Listen here, vermin, you'd better make yourself scarce if you don't want this to turn ugly. You're starting to clash with the snowy landscape.

Huk... I want to have a talk with you later.

♪ FOREVER AND EE EVER... ♫ A-AAAAMEEN... ♪

Be careful walking home, little ones. Until next Sunday...

G'bye, m'sr Karup...

AHEM, AHEM!

?!

Off you go!

SMACK!

Read the news, lately?

Yes. The truce is over. I don't intend to allow such insults to my person, especially not from refuse like him!

RRRIIP!

Bring the boys--meet me there. Wait--ready my car. It's time to settle accounts with this agitator, and his friend with the bleached muzzle.

Speaking of the cat, surely you didn't believe a single...

...wor...
...d...

CLAC

THOOM!

Hana! You can't think that I would--

THUD!

AOUGHH!!

GGGGG...

BA-DA-

AAARGH!

BLAMM

Chief, I understand that you're a little agitated, but please... that whore Oanah deserved to die like she did, but there are other ways-- more discrete...

I'm not going to kill anybody... yet.

The subway of "The Line" was a pale reflection of what could have been, but never was. Effected ten years past, the people had given up on it after the crisis, and so it had ended up just another piece of scenery in the cheery landscape.

Weekly had disappeared without a trace. Don't ask me why, but for some reason I found myself missing his "delicate aroma".

With no better lead, I decided to follow the magpie, a much less innocent fellow than he let on...

How much for this device?

This "device"...who is its rightful owner?

I'm sure I have no idea what you're talking about, good sir.

I'm talking about my friend, the journalist. He appears to have run off, and I have a feeling you know where.

I don't know nothing... they never say anything to me.

They?

And what about you? You've been wherever I've been since the day I set foot in this town. You're a bad luck bird.

I'm just a poor devil trying to make enough to buy his way to Las Vegas...

So you're a player, then? How about a game of Twenty Questions?

Where is my friend?

ANSWER!

Okay! I'll take you to him! Just don't kill me, please!

We haven't much time..

Tell me there's nothing between you and Huk

I can't believe you're giving credit to that gossip. You know better than anyone that I would never let myself be touch by a man. It disgusts me too much!

Good God, Jezz, it's unbearable! How do you expect me to react when I hear that someone's been getting what was refused to me all this time?

REPRENDS TOI, HANS. TU SAVAIS CE QUI T'ATTENDAIT QUAND NOUS AVONS ARRANGÉ NOTRE MARIAGE. DE TOUTES FAÇONS TU AS TROUVÉ DE QUOI TE CONSOLER, N'EST-CE PAS?

Besides--I think you're getting plenty enough "love" from the choirboys...

...OH!

It would be in your best interest never to repeat that, dearest. You know well it's only a lie.

And just what do you intend to do about it? Kick me out of your house like you did with your first wife? A pity that I'm not a poor black girl like she was!

You only need me in order to perserve your image! The perfect worker bee. Don't forget--that is the only reason we're married.

OUT!! GET OUT!!

With pleasure!

SLAM!

Get the ropes, bishop; the girls are in the car.

I know this building like my pocket. After all, I worked here when it was the largest airplane factory in the whole country! I could get around this place with my eyes closed, heh!

CLOSMIL AIRCRAFT INDUSTRIES
NO TRESPASSING

It was my only contribution to the war; because of my blindness, I couldn't fight.

Personally, I'd rather forget what I saw over there...

Where did you serve? Europe? I dreamed of being a pilot...

Cosmic irony: a bird that cannot fly...

Hardly the first time one of your kind has tried to lure me into a trap, Cotten...

...
Cotten?

TROMP!

We've been waiting.

You may now begin.

And so we shall...

Get him.

...E-EEEH!

What the hell are you doing?! Release me!

RELEASE ME!!

You'll all pay for this! Huk! Order them to release me!

But perhaps you might be able to tell us the owner of these little things the bishop found in the trunk.

Not the problem.

AAA!!

The factory's echoes brough the sound of the voice, both familiar and threatening at the same time.

The masked ball was just beginning, and I'd sent myself an invitation.

THIS IS A GREAT DAY FOR US, MY BROTHERS!

TODAY WILL SEE NOT ONLY THE REMOVAL OF A VERMIN ACCESSORY TO THE "CLAWS", BUT ALSO OF A SPOT WHICH FOR MANY YEARS HAS STAINED OUR DIVINE ORGANIZATION!

You've all lost your minds! Don't believe a word of this! It's the devil speaking!

HE WHO WE BELIEVED FLAWLESS HAS PROVED HIMSELF A TRAITOR BOTH TO OUR RACE AND OUR IDEALS!

HE HAS DEFILED EVERY CHRISTIAN VALUE! HE HAS MURDERED AN INNOCENT NEGRO AND DONE GOD ONLY KNOWS WHAT ELSE WITH COUNTLESS OTHER CHILDREN, PERHAPS EVEN OUR OWN! ALL THANKS TO OUR BLIND CONFIDENCE AND HIS PRIVILEGED POSITION!

LET US PUT AN END TO IT!

FILTHY DEGENERATE!

GIVE HIM THE NOOSE!

BUT I DID NOTHING! IT'S ALL LIES! IT'S BEEN BLOWN OUT OF PROPORTION! I AM INNOCENT! . . .

...INNOCENT!

Fear not, chief, I'll take good care of Jezebel in your absence!

BASTARD!!

CLANG!

And now...

YOUR TIME HAS COME, FILTH!

Oh god...

LET THIS BE AN EXAMPLE TO ALL . . .

A favour...

?

Get as far away from here as possible...

K-RRRAASH!

...NOW!!

What--!?

RAAAH!

BANG! BANG! B

BLAM

BL BLAM

AAAH!

R-RRIIPP!

CRASH!

PZIIINNNGG

FIND HIM!!

A fire! The factory is burning, is it now?

Let go of me, you stupid old man! I need to get out of here!

But what about the girl? We need to find her before the fire spreads!

Do whatever you want, it's not my problem!

But it is your problem if the others find out that you're the one who kidnapped the girl!

Hmm... True.

But you know what, I think I have a solution...

BANG!

BLAMM!

BLAM

BLAM

BLAM

Don't shoot! It's me!

We need to leave. This place is turning into an oven...

Oh, lord!

COF, COF !

This is nothing... go to my "nest".

The girl is there...

SOB... SOB...

Kylie?

It's alright kid, you're going home.

Blacksad!... are you still there?

Yes, Cotten.

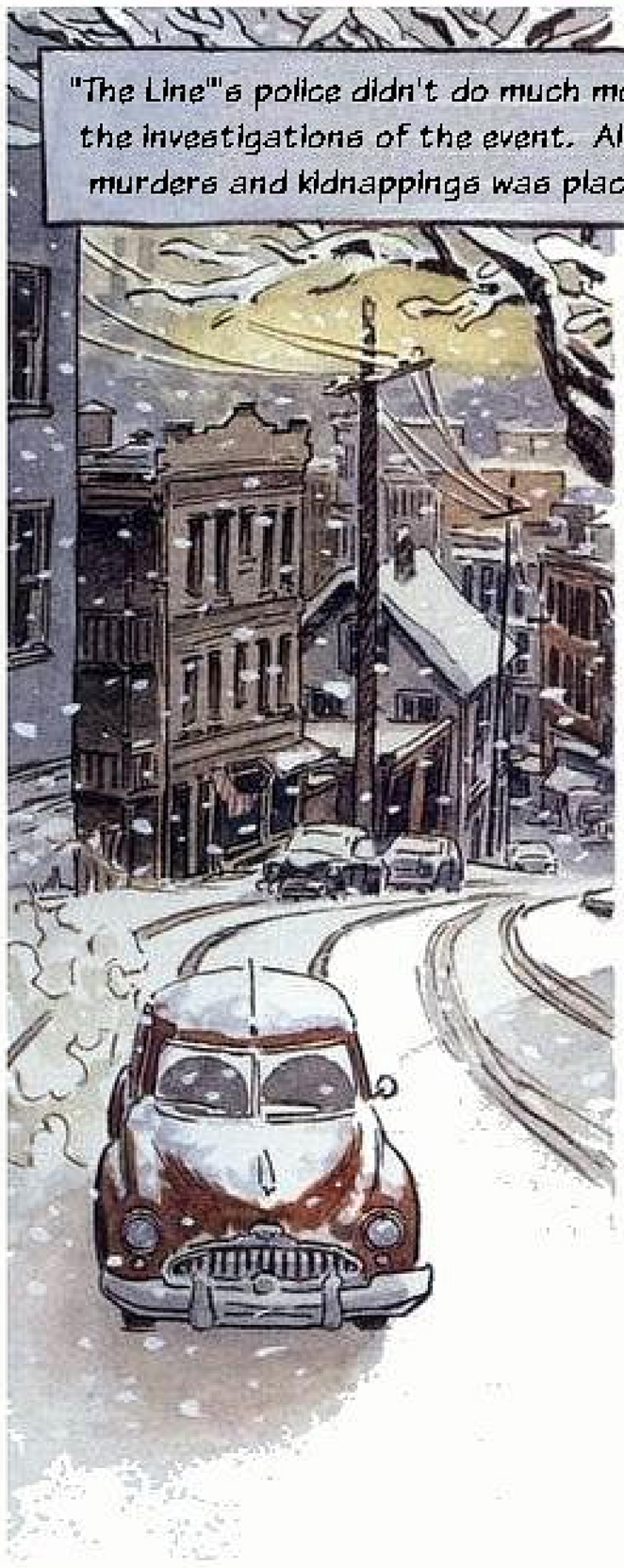
Have you ever been inside a casino? It must be marvelous... the lights... the noise... Cof, cof! The fox promised to take me there in exchange for my help... But it seems he's not a man of his word, eh?

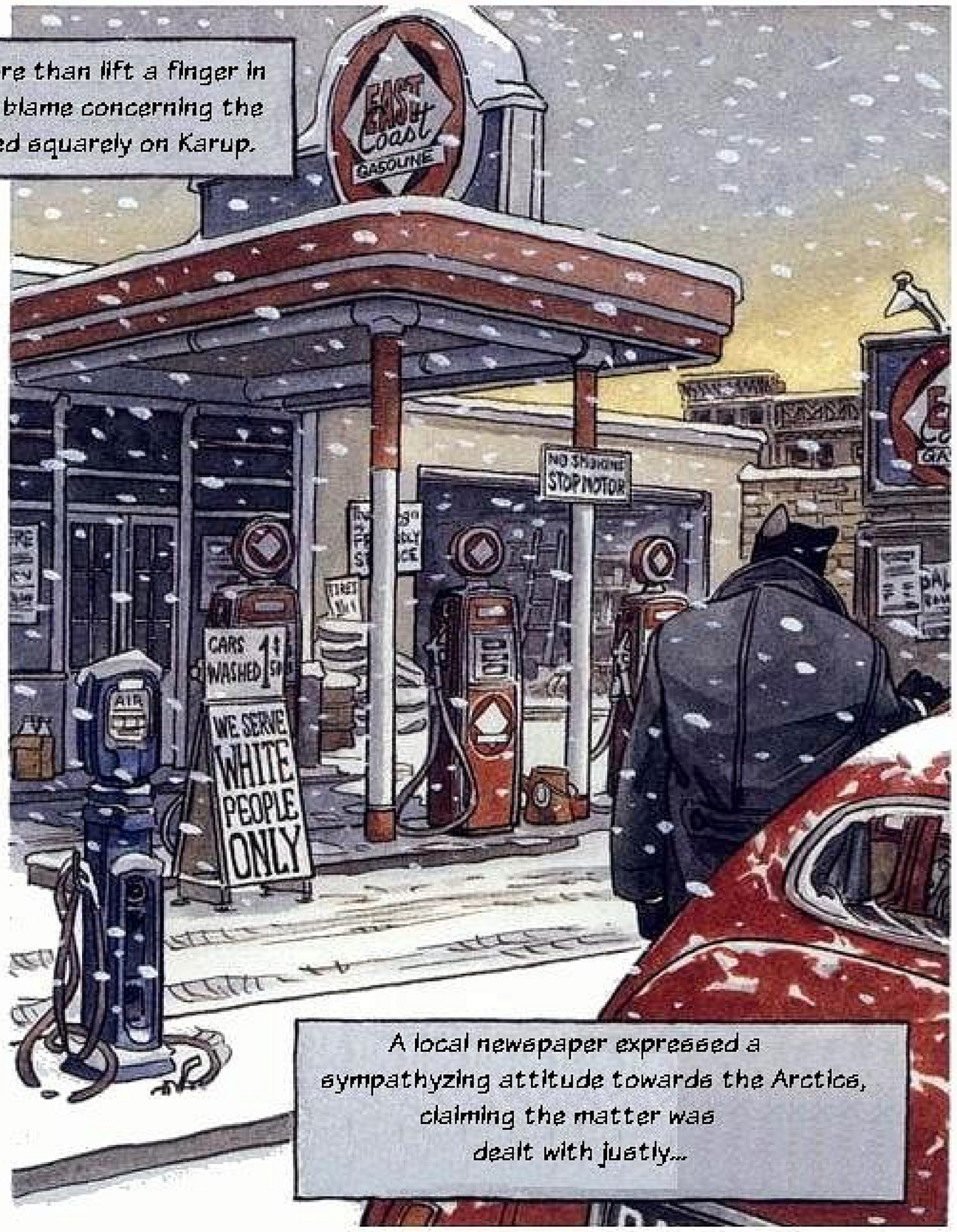
I understand you magpies like shiny things, Cotten, but this is simply obsessive...

I entrust you with the girl... but then you owe me a favour as well... Promise to take me to Las Vegas...

Fine. We'll go to the damned desert.

Hurry! We need to get out before we burn to death!





"The Line"s police didn't do much more than lift a finger in the investigations of the event. All blame concerning the murders and kidnappings was placed squarely on Karup.

A local newspaper expressed a sympathyzing attitude towards the Arctics, claiming the matter was dealt with justly...

Correct me if I'm wrong, but I don't believe that "thou shalt take upon thee the wife of thine friend" is mentioned anywhere in the Book of the Lord.

In any case, my compliments to Mademoiselle Krup. She certainly concockted an admirable strategem to remove you from the poor household.

DON'T SMOKE

Cat got your tongue?

Via a means which escaped me, Karup had exacted his vengeance from beyond the grave in his favorite manner: "blood for blood".

SOUTHERN TREES...
BEAR STRANGE FRUIT...
BLOOD AT THE LEAVES...
BLOOD AT THE ROOT...
BLACK BODIES SWINGING...
IN THE SOUTHERN BREEZE...
STRANGE FRUIT HANGING...
FROM THE POPLAR TREES...

HERE IS A FRUIT FOR THE CROWS TO PLUCK...

FOR THE RAIN TO GATHER... FOR THE WIND TO SUCK...

PASTORAL SCENE OF THE GALLANT SOUTH... THE BULGING EYES AND THE TWISTED MOUTH... THE SCENT OF MAGNOLIA SWEET AND FRESH... THEN THE SUDDEN SMELL OF BURNING FLESH...

FOR THE SUN TO ROT... FOR THE TREE TO DROP...

HERE IS A STRANGE...

... AND BITTER...

... CROP...

Don't tell me you've already found a ladyfriend in "The Line"!

And where are you off to, dressed like that?

To a burial.

You don't say. Fortunately, Weekly is here with some positive vibrations...

I've finally developed the photos. These are absolute works of art!

Houuuu! Wanna see the "merry widow" in action?

I'm afraid this doesn't shock me in the--

Weekly, contact your newspaper friends and get me all the information you can on Karup's first wife!

My dear husband...

Few among us had the chance to truly know you...

Today, we mourn your death, but we do not forget. Nor do we forgive...

Revenge is a dish which is best served cold.

?

RIP

Dinah Smith

Truly an edifying speech, Madame Karup...

Would it kill you to show respect for the pain of others?

OH!

RRRIP!

Tell me about your father.

Mother loved Karup very much. That makes it all the more painful.

By her words, he was the nicest and most charming man she had ever known. This was before that white supremacist garbage warped his mind.

Like many other young couples at the time, they moved to The Line in search of prosperity. Karup started to work with the district's "peackeepers", hoping for a socio-economic rise.

IMPORTED GOODS

Bit by bit, the love turned to contempt, then outright hatred. He started yelling at her, hitting her, just because she was black...

And when she became pregnant... the idea of having a black child was inconceivable to anyone who wanted to be anyone in the district.

She was seven months pregnant when he roused her from her bed in the middle of the night and left her for dead in the middle of a snowstorm. No one asked any questions. His new friends, proud of him, kept their peace.

But she didn't die.

Not any more. She lived just long enough to put us into the world, Danah and I. It was never the same after that.

She never returned to The Line, but for the rest of her life carried the burden of being a black, single mother. She did everything she could to forget and to survive, until the day her fragile body broke for good.

And so you two became obsessed with eliminating your mother's killer: your own father.

I infiltrated the white elite of The Line with the intention of being noticed, and succeded in capturing Karup's attention.

Exactly.
Thanks to my looks, it wasn't hard to pass for a sophisticated "Southern Belle".

And it was that same madness that made you marry him.

Yes.
While seducing him, I could easily find out what his vulnerabilities were, and what's more I had the pleasure of seeing him suffer from not being able to touch me.

Afterwards I made arrangements to have Danah hired as a maid. Our plan was beginning to take form...

It was then that Huk entered the scene.

I came to him playing the part of the distraught white woman whose husband prefers the black slave to her. Huk had a grudge against Karup; it wasn't difficult to manipulate him.

Using the rumors which had begun to circulate, we created him a scandalous history. It was the fox who thought it up.

And Danah?
It was necessary for her to die?

Poor Danah!
In the end, it was left to me to be strong. She was terrified that she might be killed to prevent her from talking. It would not have served if it came out that she was my sister. Danah didn't deserve the end she was given...

As for the fox...
I ended our relationship myself.

And now it's all over.
My mother and my sister can finally rest in peace.

And little Kylie?
Did she deserve all that?

I am cold...

The sun has finally returned. In the old days, we thought that all problems could be solved so easily.

No doubt. Do not give up, Miss Grey. There are few people like you in this world to teach this children to live without hate. Perhaps with them as its inheritants, the district will become the dream once more.

Goodbye, M. Blacksad.

OUCH!

POF!

MFF!... GRMMF!

Calm down, Week...
I see you hate snow just as much as water...

Well, I do owe you something for saving my life. Let me tell you a secret.

CLICK
VRROM

Astound me.

Well... the true reason for my nickname... euh... the secretary made a joke that I only change my clothes once per week. I... don't have a reputation for being very clean.

HA! HA!
HA! HA!!

Thank you, my friend! You've just made my day.

FIN
DE L'ÉPISODE

JUANJO GUARNIDO & JUAN DÍAZ CANALES

"De toute évidence, ma tête ne plaisait guère aux gens du quartier... J'avais cependant l'intention de continuer à la montrer. Du moins jusqu'à ce que je retrouve l'enfant..."

TITRES DISPONIBLES :

QUELQUE PART ENTRE LES OMBRES
ARCTIC-NATION

À PARAÎTRE :

ÂME ROUGE

:<

www.dargaud